

Letter about Castaneda from C. Scott Littleton to Laura Knight-Jadczyk

Dr. C. Scott Littleton, Professor of Anthropology at Occidental College, Los Angeles (author of From Scythia to Camelot), with whom I have personally discussed the issues of Carlos Castaneda, wrote to me:

Yes, I'm convinced that there was indeed a prototype of don Juan & that he was probably a Yaqui who moved rather freely between the Tucson area and northern Sonora. I also recall Carlos telling me that he never saw the guy again, at least in the flesh, after he, Nestor & Pablito jumped off the Ixtlan cliff at the climax of their initiation. He also said that his mentor died shortly thereafter.

I did hear through the grapevine that FD conned him into believing her account of her relationship with a South American shaman & managed to get him to write the foreword to her book, which, I've been told by persons I trust, is pure BS. Actually, this credulity on Castaneda's part is thoroughly believable. He was a "trickster" who often tricked himself into accepting other people's lies. ...

I do know that in the late '80s & early '90s Carlos & his disciples, most of them Indians in the country illegally, were engaged in collective dreaming experiments from their base in the Mojave Desert. These included "voyages" to "planets in nearby star systems," as he described it in the last guest lecture he ever gave to one of my UCLA Extension classes, ca. '89. ...

Finally, as I've said before, I suspect that most of the guy's experiences reflect a UFO connection, despite the absence of clear-cut UFO imagery in his writings. ... Yes, I did raise this possibility with Carlos on several occasions, and he told me that he'd "look into it." Whether he ever did is a moot point.